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United Nations

Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

General Assembly

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Sixty-first Session
Supplement No. 26 (A/61/26)

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Note

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Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–2	1
II.	Membership, composition, terms of reference and organization of the work of the Committee	3–7	1
III.	Topics dealt with by the Committee	8–85	2
	A. Transportation: use of motor vehicles, parking and related matters	8–23	2
	B. Acceleration of immigration and customs procedures	24–48	5
	C. Entry visas issued by the host country	49–65	11
	D. Host country travel regulations	66–79	14
	E. Question of privileges and immunities	80–85	17
IV.	Recommendations and conclusions	86	19
Annexes			
I.	List of topics for consideration by the Committee		21
II.	List of documents		22

I. Introduction

1. The Committee on Relations with the Host Country was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 2819 (XXVI) of 15 December 1971. The General Assembly, by its resolution 60/24 of 23 November 2005, decided to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-first session the item entitled "Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country". The present report is submitted pursuant to resolution 60/24.

2. The report consists of four sections. The recommendations and conclusions of the Committee are contained in section IV.

II. Membership, composition, terms of reference and organization of the work of the Committee

3. The Committee is composed of 19 members, as follows:

Bulgaria	Iraq
Canada	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
China	Malaysia
Costa Rica	Mali
Côte d'Ivoire	Russian Federation
Cuba	Senegal
Cyprus	Spain
France	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Honduras	
Hungary	United States of America

4. The Bureau of the Committee consists of the Chairperson, the three Vice-Chairpersons, the Rapporteur and a representative of the host country who attends Bureau meetings ex officio. During the reporting period, the Bureau was composed as follows:

Chairman:

H.E. Andreas D. Mavroyiannis (Cyprus)

Vice-Chairpersons:

Krassimira Beshkova — Branimir Zaimov (Bulgaria)
Hugh Adsett — Randy Kondo (Canada)
Koffi Gaston Yao — Marc-Aubin Banny (Côte d'Ivoire)

Rapporteur:

Marcela Calderon (Costa Rica)

5. At the 229th meeting, the Committee was informed of the departure of Krassimira Beshkova, serving as Vice-Chairperson. The Committee elected Branimir Zaimov (Bulgaria) by acclamation to fill the vacancy. At the 230th meeting, the Committee was informed of the resignation of Hugh Adsett, as Vice-Chairperson. The Committee elected Randy Kondo (Canada) by acclamation to fill this vacant position. At the 231st meeting, the Committee was informed that Koffi Gaston Yao (Côte d'Ivoire) would no longer perform the functions of Vice-Chairperson. The Committee elected Marc-Aubin Banny (Côte d'Ivoire) by acclamation to fill the vacant position.

6. The terms of reference of the Committee were determined by the General Assembly in its resolution 2819 (XXVI). In May 1992, the Committee adopted, and in March 1994 slightly modified, a detailed list of topics for its consideration, which is set out in annex I to the present report. The Committee issued eight documents during the reporting period: A/AC.154/364 to A/AC.154/371. Also relevant are documents A/61/346, A/61/474, A/C.2/61/6 and A/C.6/61/2 (see annex II to the present report).

7. During the reporting period, the Committee held the following meetings: the 227th meeting, on 18 January 2006, the 228th meeting, on 17 May 2006, the 229th meeting, on 2 August 2006, the 230th meeting, on 29 September 2006, and the 231st meeting, on 30 October 2006.

III. Topics dealt with by the Committee

A. Transportation: use of motor vehicles, parking and related matters

8. At the 227th meeting, the representative of the Russian Federation referred to difficult work conditions for members of the Mission caused by measures taken during the transit strike of December 2005 that required four passengers per car south of 96th Street in Manhattan. That had made the work of Russian Mission staff more difficult because they lived in a compound outside Manhattan, while their Mission was on 67th Street. The host country was expected to allow exemptions to the rule requiring four passengers per car for diplomatic staff in such cases since it was in contradiction with the Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations and with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (see A/AC.154/364, annex). However, no solution was found.

9. The representative of Mali said that his country's Mission had recently faced difficulties with renovations being carried out in front of its 69th Street offices. Also, he explained that the delegation of Mali had been granted a reduced number of decals compared with 2004, despite its request for a similar number. Although the Mission had received a response from the City of New York, the representative of Mali said the reasons given for the reduction had not been satisfactory. He hoped that additional parking facilities would be provided.

10. The observer of the Syrian Arab Republic said that his Mission felt that the Committee was not making the necessary efforts to settle the problems faced by diplomats at the United Nations. The same parking problems of the past had still not been settled, and the failure to renew parking permits for cars that had been issued with tickets was contrary to the host country agreement. He felt that the Appeals Committee had not given sufficient explanation for the decisions taken. That had led to a two-month delay in the renewal of a delegation member's licence plates. More generally, this situation was an impediment to the work of the Syrian delegation.

11. Regarding the transit strike, the observer of the Syrian Arab Republic supported the Russian position. He pointed out that many exemptions had been granted to cars bearing normal licence plates, while others, especially those living outside Manhattan, had been unable to travel to work because they lacked the

required number of passengers. He added that in the future certain exemptions should be granted to diplomats in such cases. He further noted that it was not safe for diplomats to have to collect strangers from bus stops in order to meet the requirement to enter the city.

12. The observer of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela supported the comments made by the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic with regard to the transit strike of December 2005. She said that the host country should make special provisions for diplomatic civil servants when such restrictions were imposed by the city. Diplomats represented Governments and as such should be granted a minimum level of security, so that they were not forced to take total strangers into their vehicles when travelling to work. Such prerequisites should not be imposed, especially upon those living outside Manhattan. The observer thus asked that, in the future, the host country ensure a minimum level of security for each diplomatic servant carrying out his duty in New York City.

13. In response to the concerns raised in relation to the transit strike, the representative of the host country said that faced with such an unfortunate situation, the city administration had done everything it could to protect the health and safety of all residents of the city including the diplomatic corps. He said that the Russian Federation had complained in writing (A/AC.154/364, annex) about the way the city had handled the strike and that the host country had replied (A/AC.154/365, annex) that the Headquarters Agreement covered traffic disruptions under section 17 (a), which stipulated that the host country must treat the United Nations and the United Nations community in the same manner as other important elements of the United States Government. He explained that there had been no special provisions made for United States Mission staff or members of the city government; therefore, no special provisions had been applied to diplomats either. He added that during the three days of disruption and bad weather, the majority of members of the diplomatic community had done a very good job withstanding the inconveniences despite the adversity they were faced with.

14. The observer of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wished to clarify that her delegation had not at any point questioned the way the city authorities had carried out their tasks during the situation in December 2005. Her Mission's request was simply that in the case of another similar event, the United States Mission should assist the New York City authorities in dealing with the problem.

15. The New York City Commissioner for the United Nations, Consular Corps and Protocol stressed that no exceptions had been made for members of the federal, state or city governments, and that if anybody had seen or heard any, the only reasonable explanation would be that it would be a police officer reporting for duty. She underlined that the City Commission had the responsibility for implementing the Parking Programme for Diplomatic Vehicles, and missions should report to it any particular problem facing them.

16. At the 228th meeting, the representative of Mali reiterated his delegation's position on the Parking Programme which had been indicated in writing to the Secretary-General when the implementation of the programme was last evaluated in 2004 and seized the opportunity of the recent appointment of the new Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs to address the question again. He welcomed the efforts made by the host country to assist his Mission regarding the matter. Nevertheless, despite the fact that his Mission's personnel strictly obeyed all laws, it

continued to object as a matter of principle to the Parking Programme adopted in November 2002. The Programme had had a negative effect on the carrying out of diplomats' work. He therefore requested that a new review of the Programme be undertaken in order to make it more flexible, so as to improve both the working and private lives of diplomats in New York.

17. At the 229th meeting, the Chairman announced that further to the request expressed by the representative of Mali at the previous meeting, a second review of the implementation of the Parking Programme would be undertaken. As a result of consultations with the Committee Bureau, he proposed a timetable. He invited delegations to submit to the Committee secretariat by mid-September any queries or problems encountered with the implementation of the Programme. The Bureau would then elaborate a questionnaire on the basis of this information, to which delegations would respond by mid-November and their feedback would be shared with the city authorities and the host country by mid-December 2006. The Committee would discuss the results at its meeting in late January 2007. That procedure and the proposed time frame were approved by the Committee.

18. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed his country's full support for the proposal. The representative of the host country said the United States authorities were pleased with the way the Parking Programme had worked, but were aware that some delegations had expressed some dissatisfaction with some parts of the Programme. He assured that the United States Mission would do whatever it could to ensure that the Programme was working smoothly and said that he looked forward to seeing the results of the review, which would, he hoped, include submissions from delegations that were not members of the Committee.

19. The observer of Viet Nam expressed his Mission's support for the suggestions presented by the Chairman and raised the following issue: some of the missions located at 866 United Nations Plaza had two parking spaces located behind the building on 49th Street, while others parked in front of their mission. Being located on 49th Street represented an inconvenience during rainy days and hindered the work of the Permanent Representative. He suggested two possible minor adjustments in allotting spaces. Each mission could park one of its cars in front of the mission and the other on 49th Street, or all missions could park on both streets on a "first come, first served" basis.

20. The representative of the Russian Federation indicated that his Mission had received a letter from the city authorities containing information on fines issued up to two years ago which had not shown up on the monthly reports owing to a computer problem. His Mission felt that those fines should be expunged by the authorities since they had omitted to fulfil their duty to inform the Mission. He felt that the United States Mission should take steps to resolve the issue. He also referred to an old issue concerning the bus for members of his Mission living in the apartment building in Riverdale. The bus was continuously ticketed when stopping at the corner of 3rd Avenue and 67th Street to let off passengers. Although representatives of the city and the host country had promised to allocate a parking spot for the bus to pick up and drop off its passengers at established timetables, the issue had still not been resolved. In addition, the two spots assigned to the Russian Mission were always occupied by non-authorized vehicles, sometimes from the nearby police precinct. Finally, he pointed out that his Mission had two parking

places for over 100 vehicles. Therefore, he welcomed the initiative to review the implementation of the Parking Programme.

21. The representative of Costa Rica admitted that as far as her Mission was concerned, there had been improvement in the implementation of the Programme. However, certain issues remained and she thought it important to take into account certain difficulties that might arise when the city or a private company decides to perform construction work on the same street as the Mission's. Also, when VIPs were invited by the United Nations and were accompanied by a lot of people, the whole street was sometimes closed. There should be a way to inform missions when such important people were visiting so that they could organize where to park in advance.

22. The observer of Nigeria informed the Committee of some parking incidents. Some members of the Mission had been issued parking tickets while parked in permitted areas marked "A" to "D". Others had received fines although they were only dropping off passengers or loading the vehicle. The observer also reported police vehicles blocking access to the Mission and preventing the Ambassador from parking his vehicle. Finally, the observer asked the Committee to look into those issues.

23. At the 230th meeting, the Chairman of the Committee stated that further to the request made by Mali at the 228th meeting, the Parking Programme implementation survey was being prepared. He recalled that he had previously invited members to submit queries for the elaboration of the review. In follow-up, the Bureau had met to draw up the questions. The questionnaire would shortly be finalized and would then be circulated, seeking feedback by mid-November 2006. The responses would be compiled by the Secretary of the Committee by mid-December and made available to the city and host country authorities so as to be presented to the Committee in mid-January 2007.

B. Acceleration of immigration and customs procedures

24. At the 227th meeting, the observer of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela expressed her delegation's gratitude in regard to assistance provided to the Permanent Representative and the Ambassador at the airports. She thanked the representatives of the United States Mission for their involvement concerning treatment received by the Permanent Representative at airports. However, she deplored the requirement of notification of the United States Mission every time the Permanent Representative was about to travel and suggested that this should not become the rule in practices carried out by the host country.

25. At the 228th meeting, the representative of Mali renewed his request to extend the exemption from body searches to permanent representatives at airports. His delegation's suggestion was to provide the heads of mission with documentation to identify them in the airports of New York to facilitate their transfer through the airports.

26. At the 229th meeting, the observer of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela commented that her Mission's high-level delegates had not been treated properly at United States airports. Representatives of the host country had previously advised that they would be grateful if permanent missions could notify the airport authorities

of travel plans two days in advance. However, she expressed her Mission's disapproval of that practice. She noted that her Mission had notwithstanding obeyed the rules, but underlined that recently the Permanent Representative had been subjected to disproportionate immigration procedures in verifying his identity. She highlighted that many trips were planned at the last minute and that therefore, it was impossible to notify the authorities two days in advance. She said that her Mission felt the best solution would be to train the airport and immigration authorities with regard to entry and exit procedures for mission staff and diplomatic corps to ensure that they were given dignified treatment. She also noted that during recent travels, she had noticed that the booth for diplomatic staff had been removed and wondered why. She explained that diplomatic staff needed to be processed as speedily as possible without going through rigorous procedures in order to perform their duties.

27. The United States representative responded that it was difficult for him to judge what was proper or improper treatment, but that it was of paramount importance to him and to the Department of Homeland Security that visitors to the United States — whether diplomats, tourists or students — be treated with dignity upon their arrival. He was interested to know the exact nature of the problems encountered by the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. He recalled that an arrangement was in place with the Venezuelan Mission to ease the comings and goings of Venezuelan diplomats, which had worked well in the case of Ambassador Toro. He explained that there were various reasons why air travellers were stopped either upon departure or arrival. Often, those reasons were random, but sometimes, they were not. He added that when the Mission was notified in advance, it did what it could, but it needed specific information on the traveller at least two days ahead of time. If the information came only a day in advance, the Mission could still do its best but it must have the details of the particular problem in order to help. He recalled that the United States Mission had done and would continue to do all it could to assist when problems occur, but no one could expect it to foresee a problem, and it was not fair to the travelling public for a diplomat to be exempted from security screening.

28. The observer of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela clarified that, in fact, she had only been referring to a specific case and that her Mission rejected the idea of having to notify authorities prior to travel. It was suggesting putting a different mechanism in place such as training airport staff on how to treat diplomatic staff. It was not a question of distinguishing between human beings, but diplomats on official duties enjoyed certain rights under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the Headquarters Agreement. Also, she reiterated her previous question regarding the booth dealing with diplomatic staff at immigration.

29. The representative of the host country said it was the first report he had had of the removal of the diplomatic booth and that the United States Mission would certainly look into it. He asked in which terminal it had been noticed and the date it had happened in order to find information on the matter. He said that he would get back to the Committee if the findings were of concern to all members.

30. At the 230th meeting, the observer of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela raised two incidents affecting senior officials attending the general debate of the General Assembly. The first incident had taken place on 23 September 2006 at John F. Kennedy airport when the Venezuelan Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nicolás Maduro Moros, was asked to go through secondary screening for no apparent reason.

despite revealing his identity, and was held for one hour and a half, during which he was threatened with being handcuffed and prohibited from any form of communication. The second incident reported was that of the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Jorge Valero, who was held on 20 September 2006 by airport officials upon arrival on a Continental Airlines flight from Panama. He was held for no reason for almost an hour while he was subjected to various checks. Referring to similar incidents he encountered, the Venezuelan observer concluded that there had been a violation of section 11 of the Headquarters Agreement according to which the host country should not impose any impediment to transit of representatives of Member States, and a violation of article 26 of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (see A/AC.154/370, annex). She asked the Committee to take the necessary measures to avoid any further interference with the work of missions.

31. The observer of the Sudan thanked the Chairman and his colleagues in the Bureau for their efforts. He also wished to report an incident at Dulles airport in Washington, D.C., against his Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ali Ahmed Karti. He was on his way to New York and was held for five hours before being authorized to continue his journey. The observer of the Sudan stated that such treatment was unacceptable and not in keeping with the Headquarters Agreement or diplomatic practice. The Sudan considered the detention to be in violation of international law. In his opinion, the treatment inflicted upon the Venezuelan and Sudanese delegations reflected the state of relations between the host country and those countries. Other channels should be used to resolve existing differences at the bilateral level. He asked the Committee to take the necessary measures to protect the rights of Member States.

32. The representative of Cuba read out a press release issued by the President of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries condemning the incident against Mr. Maduro as an unacceptable violation of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the Headquarters Agreement and all norms and practices regarding treatment of internationally protected persons. The representative recalled that there had already been similar problems in the past and underlined the need for effective measures instead of mere talk. She said that both incidents were unacceptable because they were selective and politically motivated.

33. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed his gratitude to the host country and the United Nations for the good organization of the General Assembly except for the incident encountered by the Venezuelan Minister for Foreign Affairs, which unfortunately was not the first of its kind. He said that until the host country adopted measures to prevent such incidents, they would continue to occur. It was easier to prevent problems than to try to resolve each individual issue. He stressed the need to clarify the status of foreign officials who come to the United States on official business as well as the need to investigate incidents and prevent repetition in the future.

34. The observer of Belarus indicated that the incident against the Venezuelan Foreign Minister was contrary to host country obligations and required very serious investigation, highlighting that it should not be repeated in the future. He also pointed out that the United States was not the only country threatened by terrorism and that common sense and flexibility should prevail when dealing with heads of delegation upon their arrival at John F. Kennedy airport. He then expressed gratitude towards the United States authorities for the valuable assistance they had provided

to the Mission at the airport during the departure of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus.

35. The representative of China said that his delegation was shocked by the treatment given to the Venezuelan Foreign Minister. He said that even if the United States had apologized, the incident had nonetheless taken place. He hoped that the host country would honour its obligations embodied in the 1961 Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and the Headquarters Agreement and would learn a lesson to ensure that the privileges and immunities of diplomatic personnel in the United States would not be infringed upon.

36. The observer of the Islamic Republic of Iran said that the Headquarters Agreement provided that the host country should not impose any impediment to transit of representatives of Member States and deplored the recent failure of the host country to abide by its obligations. He expressed shock at the incident against the Venezuelan and Sudanese Foreign Ministers and underlined the need for serious investigation.

37. The representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya thanked the host country for the arrangements adopted to receive delegations attending the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. However, he said that this type of incident should never occur again and that both cases should be investigated and avoided in the future in compliance with the relevant international instruments.

38. The representative of Mali said that his delegation was delighted at host country efforts to respect its international commitments. However, his delegation felt that the Venezuelan and Sudanese incidents were regrettable and that steps should be taken by the host country to avoid repetition. He added that more systematic action should be taken to settle this in a friendly manner. He suggested that the Chairman, with the support of the Legal Counsel, work closely with the representatives of the host country to establish the official position of the host country in order to avoid having to bring up the same concerns continuously at Committee meetings. That could be done through an exchange of views to determine what policy could be adopted to manage the arrivals and departures of members of the diplomatic community.

39. In response to all these comments, the representative of the host country said that he felt he was entering a premeditated ambush without being given an opportunity to explain the host country's position. He pointed out that it was the first time that the host country delegation had heard of the Sudanese complaint. He said the United States Mission would be happy to look into the details and would get back to the Committee on the issue. The representative ascertained that the complaints voiced were the only ones out of the 160 delegations received for the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. He said that the Venezuelan accusations concerning the Minister for Foreign Affairs were unfounded and vague and that in any case, nothing prevented airport screenings in the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations or the Headquarters Agreement. He added that the 1961 Convention on Diplomatic Relations did not apply in that case. He reminded representatives that a circular diplomatic note to all permanent missions had been sent on 10 September 2002 announcing enhanced security measures. The note clearly stated that diplomats, dignitaries or their family members should expect that their baggage and their persons would be subject to those measures. The

representative explained that screening was applicable to everyone but that the United States had agreed to ease measures as a matter of courtesy in a circular note dated 9 February 2004 ("the escort screening courtesies programme"), according to which States could ask for escorts for foreign ministers and other cabinet rank officials around screening checkpoints at United States airports. Many missions had taken advantage of this programme; however the Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was not one of them. Moreover, at the Committee meeting of 2 August, the host country had offered its assistance if notified in advance. The United States representative then explained that the reason the Venezuelan Foreign Minister had been subject to secondary screening was because he had fallen within the category of people who purchase one-way tickets in cash at the last minute. He had not been automatically exempted when he identified himself as a diplomat because airport officials were aware that some terrorists had, in the past, used fake diplomatic passports. As for the alleged threats that he would be beaten or handcuffed, individuals present at the scene reported that it was actually the Foreign Minister himself who presented his wrists to be handcuffed. The United States representative added that airport records showed that the whole process had taken only 27 minutes as opposed to the alleged 90 minutes. Furthermore, the Foreign Minister had refused the screening and had then decided independently not to board the plane, either for personal or, possibly, for political reasons. He concluded that other missions did not seem to have had any such problems and wondered what the real motivation of the Venezuelan Mission might be.

40. The representative of the host country then addressed the second reported incident of 20 September 2006 against the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Jorge Valero. He said that the allegations could not be confirmed in the light of airport records, which indicated that no Venezuelan Deputy Foreign Minister and no one named Jorge Valero had entered the United States at an airport in the New York area on the day in question. He thus asked for more specific information to make further inquiries. He suggested that next time, the Venezuelan Mission contact the United States Mission in advance of travel for assistance.

41. The representative of the host country also addressed the other allegations made by the Venezuelan observer regarding various members of his President's delegation regarding mistreatment upon arrival to or departure from the United States. In this regard, he deplored the fact that the letter dated 15 September 2006 to the Secretary-General, copied to the Chairman and the United States representative, was lacking any specifics or details. As a result, the United States Mission was not in a position to investigate and, if necessary, correct the situation.

42. The observer of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela expressed her preference for a constructive approach rather than a negative one. She clarified that there was no ambush here. She said the hypothesis of the United States was a strong one but that others existed. For example, one could consider that the incident was a measure of retaliation because someone had not liked President Chavez's speech. She personally did not believe it, but it was a possibility. She said that things could be resolved without violence. She believed that on the ministerial level, a certain treatment had to be granted by the host authorities, including by immigration officers who were using unnecessary force. The real problem, according to her, was one of proportion as well as one of training. She stated that she would send copies of notices on the details of the incident regarding Jorge Valero.

43. The representative of Cuba stressed the need to avoid a repetition of similar incidents and lamented the approach taken by the host country, which was not conducive to a resolution of the matter.

44. The representative of Mali, in response to the statement made by the representative of the host country, said that his intention had been to make a positive contribution to the Committee in a spirit of cooperation. He also pointed out that it was a disturbing factor to hear that terrorists held diplomatic passports and asked for confirmation of this. Finally, he seized the opportunity of the host country representative's presence to recall his Mission's previous complaint of bodily search performed on the Head of Mission, which had been voiced on numerous occasions. He wondered if circumstances allowed such bodily searches, considering the dignity attached to ambassadors who were normally exempt from such measures. He reiterated his well-known request to extend such facilities to heads of mission.

45. The observer of the Sudan recalled that the United States Mission had acknowledged that the Venezuelan and Sudanese incidents had occurred. He stressed that his Mission had not conspired with any other delegation on the matter, and clarified that his delegation had simply sent a note to the Chairman of the Committee to request that the issue be discussed during the meeting. He noted that terms such as "ambush" or "conspiracy theory" did not serve the cause of the discussion. Finally, he said that his Mission supported the suggestion made by Mali and reaffirmed the need for a spirit of cooperation.

46. The representative of the United States again addressed the fundamental points at hand. He clarified that his Mission did, indeed, reject the Venezuelan and Sudanese allegations of violations of obligations and responsibilities, being that the incidents could have been avoided if mechanisms in place had been respected. He repeated that out of all the delegations, only one had reported a problem during the General Assembly because the procedures available had not been sought. He added that the Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela should not hesitate to contact the United States Mission even if it was on very short notice. The host country representative said that the facts suggested that there had been no incident and that retribution was impossible being that President Chavez himself had not had any problems going through the same airport.

47. The representative of the host country clarified that it did not have Mali in mind when talking about an ambush. However, he repeated that the reading of typed and prepared declarations by a number of delegations in reference to the Sudan when the United States had just found out about the incident led to such a conclusion. He indicated that the host country would of course look into the Sudanese incident. In response to the Malian suggestion of training, the representative said it was a great idea and that it was already being done. He indicated that airports had fine staff but that not everyone was perfect. He added that the United States Mission was open to suggestions as to new mechanisms and recalled that, when Missions called the host country, those calls were never refused.

48. Finally, the observer of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela repeated that her delegation was there to seek solutions. She insisted that his Foreign Minister had suffered aggression personally. She also noted that emergency trips could be required at any time, which was why cash had been used. She suggested training immigration officers to ensure proper treatment of high-level officials and diplomats.

C. Entry visas issued by the host country

49. At the 227th meeting, the representative of Mali expressed his delegation's satisfaction with the management of visa proceedings by the host country.

50. The observer of Belarus, however, reported the failure by the host country authorities to issue an entry visa for Nikolai Cherganitz, Chairman of the National Assembly's Committee on International Affairs and International Security, to travel to New York for a number of meetings at United Nations Headquarters. That had happened despite the fact that his application had been sent in good time to the United States Embassy in Minsk. The observer of Belarus reported that the Embassy had expressed its unwillingness to provide a visa, in violation of section 11 of the host country agreement. He asked that the host country take measures to prevent the reoccurrence of such situations in the future and ensure the unimpeded entry into the United States of official representatives of Member States.

51. The representative of the host country said in response that the Mission of Belarus had sent a diplomatic note to the Chairman of the Committee and that consequently the Chairman and he had discussed the matter. He offered to repeat the content of the information discussed for other members of the Committee. Nikolai Cherganitz had applied to attend an Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) session, as well as several meetings of the General Assembly over a 70-day period. The approval of his visa was somewhat delayed because of additional administrative processing due to the required analysis made necessary by questionable activities undertaken by Mr. Cherganitz during his previous visit to the United States. In consequence, the visa had not been ready for Mr. Cherganitz to travel on the date requested to attend the IPU session but would have been issued in time for the General Assembly meetings a few days later. However, instead of waiting to have the visa issued, he had asked for the return of his passport, saying that he no longer intended to travel. The passport had thus been returned on 15 November with a note to the effect that the visa was approved for travel to the United States until February 2007. The representative of the host country added that travelling after that date would be possible but that Mr. Cherganitz would then have to apply for a new visa.

52. At the 228th meeting, the observer of Saudi Arabia raised the issue of the repeated denial of G-5 visa applications, specifically for housekeeping staff to be employed by her Mission. On several occasions in the past two years, visas had been refused to certain persons from Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Ethiopia despite the recommendation by reliable employment agencies. Her Mission understood that the issuance of visas was discretionary in nature, but their constant denial, despite the presentation of the proper documentation, had made it very difficult and inconvenient for the diplomats and families concerned. She had been told by the United States Mission that the decision of the Consular Officer at the United States Embassy in Jakarta was due to bad publicity in local newspapers regarding the improper treatment of certain housekeepers by diplomats, even though they were not connected with the Saudi Mission. She noted that United States citizens working in Saudi Arabia rarely encountered such problems. She sought the assistance of the Committee to bring the matter to the attention of the United States Mission and hoped for a rapid solution to the problem.

53. The representative of Cuba expressed her delegation's gratitude for the assistance of the United States Mission in processing visas. However, she pointed

out that sometimes there were delays in processing visa requests, which sometimes led to preventing the officials from travelling or from attending meetings on time. She also wished for the representative of the host country to provide the telephone number to be called in case of emergency cases concerning visa processing.

54. The representative of the host country thanked the representative of Cuba for her statement and added that the relationship between their two Missions on visa coordination matters was a very good one but one that called for continuing discussions. He answered that due to a crushing workload in the Mission on visa matters, phone calls would only be processed during a certain period in an attempt to limit those calls. However, he offered that in the event of an emergency, delegations could contact him directly. In response to the question relating to the issuance of G-5 visas, the United States representative explained in detail the application process by which a domestic employee applicant was granted such a visa. Those visas were approved based on whether the applicant met statutory eligibility requirements. The nationality of the applicant or the employer was not a criterion for visa approval. Unlike other visas, G-5 visa applicants were subject to all United States immigration requirements, including careful review of the contracts and assurance that those personnel would leave the country when such employment had concluded. He said that if a mission experienced an inexplicable problem with an application, the United States Mission would be willing to look into it. The United States representative added that as long as the requirements were fulfilled, negative publicity about how some domestic employees might have been treated would not influence the issuance of a visa.

55. At the 229th meeting, the observer of Saudi Arabia expressed the hope for possible improvement of procedures followed by the United States authorities in the following areas: she mentioned delays at the United States Embassy in Riyadh, up to six months long, for scheduling interviews for visa requests for B, F and particularly G-5 visas. She lamented the fact that visas for household workers (G-5 visas) could only be issued overseas by the United States embassies and not by the United States Mission as had been the practice some years back. She explained that some G-5 visa holders lived in remote provinces or villages and had to spend time during their vacation leave to travel to and from the American Embassy in Riyadh for visa renewals.

56. The observer of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela expressed support for the comments made by her Saudi Arabian counterpart and said that her Mission had encountered similar problems, and hoped that Heads of State and Government wishing to attend the sixty-first session of the General Assembly in September would not have difficulty entering the United States.

57. In response to the Venezuelan concerns, the representative of the host country said that, in the coming days, his Mission would be issuing a circular diplomatic note to all permanent missions and observer offices reminding them of the importance of applying early for visas for the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. He hoped that individuals who had had trouble in past years had already applied for their visas. He had not heard specifically about any visa concerns from the Venezuelan Mission, but invited it to contact the United States Mission in that regard so that it could try to help expedite the entry of individuals who might have had problems in the previous year. He did not want them to have problems for the second year in a row because they had waited until the last minute to apply. In

response to Saudi Arabia's concerns, he explained that student and tourist visas were not within the Committee's mandate, but that he would pass on those concerns to authorities in Washington, D.C., in a spirit of cooperation. With regard to G visas, the United States was obligated under the Headquarters Agreement to facilitate the entry of State representatives to the United Nations, members of Missions and delegates coming from the capital. However, the question of G-5 visas for domestic employees was a bit more complicated since the Headquarters Agreement did not address it. In the past the United States Mission and the State Department had reissued or renewed G-5 visas as a favour and as a way of facilitating a Mission's work. Unfortunately, the laws regulating G-5 visas had changed several years ago following trouble with visa holders. Either they left their employer to find jobs elsewhere or, in some cases, there were complaints of bad treatment by their employers. As a result, the Departments of State and Homeland Security now required interviews in the visa application process for household workers, which made it more complicated and time-consuming. He explained further that it was contrary to regulations for visa officers of the United States Mission to call in G-5 employees for interviews or fingerprinting for the reissuance of their visas, so it was no longer reissuing those visas in New York. He said that the United States Mission had been working with the Mission of Saudi Arabia concerning particular problems with G-5 applications and would continue to facilitate in any manner it could the entry of domestic employees and of the diplomatic community in New York.

58. At the 230th meeting, the observer of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela complained that the presidential medical team had not been able to get visas to enter the United States on 13 September 2006, notwithstanding the host country obligation to expedite visas promptly.

59. The observer of the Sudan thanked the host country for granting visas on 17 September 2006 to President Omar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir and his delegation. However, those visas bore the insulting inscription "Restricted mobility within 25 miles of Columbus Circle", despite the fact that they had not requested to go anywhere other than United Nations Headquarters. He said that if his authorities had known about that hateful stamp in advance, they would have rejected the entry visa.

60. The observer of the Islamic Republic of Iran appreciated the efforts of the host country with regard to the timely issuance of visas. Nonetheless, he wished to bring to the attention of the Committee that the Iranian Interior Minister, Mostafa Pourmohamadi, had been denied a visa, despite his invitation by the President of the General Assembly, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/227, to participate in the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (see A/61/346, annex). He said the denial was all the more astonishing since all the requirements had been exhausted in a timely manner. The issue had been brought to the attention of the Secretary-General and to the Committee expressing the Iranian Mission's strong protest. He hoped that the host country would take the appropriate measures to prevent a repetition of such a failure in the future.

61. In response to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the representative of the host country said that a total of 223 visas had been issued to the delegation out of which only 6 had not been issued in time. Visas for three military officers had not been refused but had necessitated further checking owing to the applicants' background. The other three were for Cuban nationals travelling under Venezuelan passports. The United States representative recalled that, at the 229th meeting, the

host country had urged the Venezuelan Mission to apply for visas early and to contact the Mission in case there appeared to be difficulties. He said that applications for the six pending visas had only been submitted between 6 and 13 September for an arrival date of 18 September and stressed that notification of the problem had only been received on the day of departure. In the circumstances, little could be done.

62. In response to the Sudan, the representative of the host country said that the United States authorities had made huge efforts to allow, at very short notice, the President and his delegation to come to New York earlier than planned. Due to the circumstances, restrictions that had been previously lifted mistakenly appeared on the visas, which the representative of the host country sincerely regretted.

63. In response to the Islamic Republic of Iran, the representative of the United States said that his Mission was aware of the incident and was in the process of investigation. He did not have an answer yet but would be in contact with the Iranian Mission as soon as the necessary information was obtained.

64. The observer of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela said that only the President could decide the size of his delegation and that the comments made on numbers by the representative of the host country were irrelevant. She also reminded his counterpart that the President of the United States had gone to Mar del Plata with 2,000 people, and no South American country had objected. Finally, she stressed that it was a sovereign decision of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to give its nationality to Cuban individuals and that they should not be set aside because they had been naturalized.

65. The representative of Cuba lamented the link made by the United States representative between the nationality of individuals bearing Venezuelan passports who were in the President's delegation and the issuance of their visas.

D. Host country travel regulations

66. The Chairperson opened the 227th meeting by informing the participants that the host country authorities had lifted the travel notification requirement applicable to United Nations staff members of Vietnamese nationality and their families for travel beyond 25 miles of Columbus Circle in New York City. The host country had communicated that decision in a diplomatic note to the Secretariat dated 3 January 2006.

67. The representative of the Russian Federation welcomed the measure lifting the travel limitations for Vietnamese nationals as evidence that the host country was prepared to take action to reduce such limitations. Her delegation hoped that restrictions on other countries would be reduced and eventually eliminated. The representative of Mali also welcomed the measure on behalf of his delegation.

68. At the 228th meeting, the representative of Cuba expressed her delegation's profound concern at the fact that the host country authorities had denied the request of Rodolfo Benitez, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Cuba, to travel beyond 25 miles of Columbus Circle in New York City in order to participate in a seminar organized by the International Peace Academy and held in West Point, New York (A/AC.154/366, annex). The seminar was designed to address the needs and interests of the permanent missions to the United Nations and promote professional

development in the area of peace and security. She said that, out of the diplomats selected from 40 different permanent missions, the Cuban diplomat was the only one not allowed to attend, due to the denial by the host country authorities. She stressed that permits for travel requested by officials of permanent missions were subject to the Headquarters Agreement between the United Nations and the United States and other legal instruments on privileges and immunities. She pointed out that restrictions on travel beyond the 25-mile zone were arbitrary and politically motivated and caused interference with the appropriate functioning of missions as well as discrimination against the Cuban Mission, which was placed in a disadvantaged negotiating position.

69. The representative of the Russian Federation associated himself with these comments. He reiterated his delegation's position that such restrictions were discriminatory and not in accordance with the fundamental principles of international law.

70. The observer of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela added that she hoped the necessary measures would be adopted to prevent any interference with the functioning of permanent missions, such as travel restrictions. She supported what her Russian colleague had said about such measures being discriminatory, unfair, selective and in pursuit of a unilateral political aim. She stated that her country urged for other measures to be adopted so as to overcome the problem.

71. In response, the representative of the host country said that the position of the host country on the matter was well known. He repeated that the establishment of restrictions on a few countries was not arbitrary and political, but done for national security reasons. He added that it was well known that the United States Mission did not restrict official travel, and did not interfere with the proper functioning of permanent missions. Travel that might be restricted was personal travel that was not for the benefit of the functioning of the Mission. He also mentioned that the host country was reviewing travel restrictions on an ongoing basis. As an example of this, he reminded the participants that the host country had recently lifted restrictions on the Mission of Viet Nam and on nationals of Viet Nam in the Secretariat. With regards to the case mentioned by the Cuban delegation, he referred the Committee to the response of the United States, which was contained in document A/AC.154/367 (see annex II). After careful consideration, the decision to deny Mr. Benitez's travel was made because the travel was not for official United Nations business, as the International Peace Academy was not part of the United Nations system.

72. The representative of Cuba answered that it was an ongoing point of dissension between Cuba and the United States how to define whether meetings were on the United Nations agenda. She said that her delegation considered such meetings as facilitating decision-making within the United Nations and that the presence of the Cuban diplomat would therefore have been very useful at the seminar. She said she did not understand how the attendance of Cuban diplomats at meetings outside of the 25-mile zone on matters on the United Nations agenda could constitute a security problem for the host country. Cuban diplomats had never committed acts in violation of the security of the host country.

73. At the 229th meeting, the representative of the Russian Federation expressed the view that the practice of limiting the travel of Russian diplomats to a 25-mile radius was discriminatory and inconsistent with international law and opined that

the Committee's ability to resolve the issue went directly to the assessment of the effectiveness of its work.

74. The representative of Cuba expressed deep concern about a restriction against Ismara Vargas Walter of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to travel beyond a 25-mile radius from Columbus Circle, which had led to her not attending a meeting of the working group on the Crime of Aggression, chaired by the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein, at Princeton University, New Jersey, from 8 to 11 June 2006 (A/AC.154/368). She expressed regret that the host country continued to deny requests for the travel of Cuban diplomats for United Nations-related events or organized by permanent missions accredited to the Organization. That practice placed Cuban officials at a disadvantage in negotiating and adopting documents. The policy was discriminatory and politically motivated and contravenes the obligations of the host country contained in the Headquarters Agreement and instruments relating to privileges and immunities, as well as the 1975 Vienna Convention on the Representation of States in Their Relations with International Organizations of a Universal Character. The representative of Cuba conveyed her delegation's request to the host country that it reconsider its position in conformity with the general principles of international law of equality and non-discrimination.

75. The representative of the United States responded that his Mission was mindful of a letter from the Cuban Mission to both his Mission and the Chairman of the Committee (A/AC.154/368) regarding the inability of Cuban diplomats to attend a recent meeting in New Jersey, indicating that his Mission would provide a written response as soon as it was finalized. He agreed that it would have been much easier if the meeting had been held within the 25-mile radius. As for the comments made by the Russian delegate, he said that the remaining restrictions imposed on certain members of that Mission only required written notification to the host country that travel would take place. He said discussions were ongoing between the Russian Federation and the United States Government and would continue with regard to this issue. He added that the host country's position on travel restrictions is well known and had not changed over the years and he had nothing to add at this point.

76. The representative of Cuba clarified that due to a possible error in translation, it had been wrongfully understood by the United States Mission that her delegation regretted that the meeting was held outside the 25-mile radius. In fact, her delegation lamented the fact that the travel permit was denied and did not have anything against the representative of Liechtenstein wanting to hold the meeting in Princeton for logistical reasons.

77. At the 230th meeting, the observer of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela mentioned that travel restrictions were in conflict with international instruments and were unfair and selective.

78. In response, the representative of the host country said that travel restrictions were still in place for a few missions (not including the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), and that they were not in contradiction with any host country obligation under international law as long as they did not affect official business or meetings. He recalled that those measures were motivated by reasons of national security and were reviewed on an ongoing basis. He added that some of these restrictions had been eliminated or reduced in recent years.

79. The representative of Cuba referred to the letter dated 11 September 2006 from the United States Mission (A/AC.154/369) in response to the letter dated 26 June 2006 from the Cuban Mission (A/AC.154/368) with regard to the refusal to grant a visa to the Third Secretary, Ismara Vargas Walter, to travel to Princeton University to participate in the informal meeting from 8 to 11 June 2006 on the crime of aggression, chaired by the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein. The Cuban representative said that her Mission considered the reasons given as unacceptable since the meeting had been organized by a delegation accredited to the United Nations and convened under a General Assembly resolution. She concluded the measure was unfair, selective, discriminatory and politically motivated.

E. Question of privileges and immunities

80. At the 228th meeting, the representative of the Russian Federation referred to a car accident that had taken place on 22 April involving a Russian attaché, Ilya Morozov. He said the Russian Federation gave particular importance to the responsibility of staff and its diplomatic and consular offices to respect the laws and rules of the host country and that his Mission had considered the incident very seriously. However, some questions were still pending. For instance, it had taken only one day for the United States to accuse the diplomat of a serious crime, namely that of attacking a policeman, and then demanding that he be deprived of his diplomatic immunities. Yet, nearly a month later, the United States had been unable to provide his delegation with any official document supporting that accusation. He also complained that the Russian diplomat had been subjected to arrest, handcuffed, taken to a police station and detained there for several hours even though he was driving a car with diplomatic plates and had all documentation, including his diplomatic identification card. This was clearly contrary to article 29 of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the 1947 Headquarters Agreement, which both stated that diplomats were personally inviolable and could not be arrested or detained. Those words were also printed on the back of the diplomatic passport. He could therefore not accept the argument that there had been a regrettable mistake nor could he understand that the police officers who had made the arrest were not aware of the norms of international law relating to the status of diplomats. He insisted that the Russian Federation made sure that its diplomats respected all local laws, including while driving, but, unfortunately, incidents did occur. In Moscow alone, over the past two years, Russian law enforcement agencies had recorded 25 serious traffic violations by United States diplomats. The Russian Federation had sought to resolve these incidents on a bilateral basis and had not allowed speculative articles in the press. He believed he could expect the same treatment from other countries.

81. In response, the United States representative wished to clarify some of the points raised. He pointed out that the Russian attaché had not been deprived of his privileges and immunities but, rather, that the host country had asked the Russian Federation to waive them, so that he could face the charges against him. The host country representative further added that the United States had a very free and very vigorous press, and that avoiding certain articles was not possible, nor would the United States ever want to intervene in that regard. He continued by saying that the nature of the incident, coupled with the coverage it received in the press, had led the United States to believe that it should take quick action with a mission with which it

had very close and good relations. He mentioned that the United States had sent a diplomatic note to the Mission on Tuesday, 25 April, asking the Russian Federation to waive Mr. Morozov's immunity. The next day it had received a diplomatic note saying that the Russian Federation would not do that. The United States representative then said that Mr. Morozov was now back in Russia and that the question of what charges might have been brought against him or what documentation might exist in his case seemed now to be moot.

82. At the 229th meeting, the representative of the Russian Federation once again raised the issue of the traffic incident involving a Russian attaché on 22 April 2006. He recalled that his Mission had requested the United States Mission both bilaterally and during previous Committee meetings to send documentation establishing the guilt of the diplomat. However, three months later his Mission had still not received anything. The diplomat involved in the accident had had to leave for Moscow upon insistence of the United States Mission. He reiterated his Mission's request that the United states Mission either send the documents proving the guilt of the diplomat or report that there were no such documents. He wished to hear comments from the host country on how a diplomat driving a car with diplomatic licence plates and having his diplomatic identification on hand had been arrested and handcuffed and led to a police precinct, where he had been detained for a few hours. He expected documentation on the matter and an apology.

83. In response, the representative of the host country reiterated what he had said at the 228th meeting. The case was moot because there would be no prosecution in the host country given that the Russian delegation had elected to withdraw Mr. Morozov. He recalled that the man had been charged with seven different summonses, including driving while intoxicated and injuring a New York City police officer. The procedure in such instances was that the United States Mission would request a waiver of that person's immunity so that the charges could be adjudicated according to state law. However, the Russian Mission had notified the United States Mission that Mr. Morozov had returned to Moscow. As for the provision of documents, the United States Mission had never agreed to provide the Russian Mission with documentation on that case. Charging documents and police reports, according to the laws of New York State, are given to the accused and/or the person's lawyers at the time of arraignment. In the current case, there was no judicial arraignment, and therefore no possibility of giving the Russian Mission the documents it requested. So, the United States Mission had no option but to abide by New York State law.

84. The representative of the Russian Federation responded to those comments, insisting that if Mr. Morozov had left the country, it was because the Russian Mission had received a note from the United States Mission which had given them two options: either waive his immunity or send him back to Moscow. He added that following the accident, public comments had been made by Mr. Bloomberg, Mayor of New York City, and Mr. Bolton, United States representative. The matter was thus being widely publicized but at the same time the documents corroborating Mr. Morozov's guilt had not been handed over to the Russian Mission. The problem was that the attaché denied the allegation that he hit a police officer and the Russian Mission would like to know the truth.

85. The representative of the host country responded that the United States Mission was not at the scene and that the normal resolution of a dispute of that

nature was for it to go to trial. Mr. Morozov had immunity and was thus not subject to the jurisdiction of the courts of New York. The only way the truth could have been found was through trial but that could not happen now.

IV. Recommendations and conclusions

86. **At its 231st meeting, on 30 October 2006, the Committee approved the following recommendations and conclusions:**

(a) **The Committee reaffirms the Headquarters Agreement and the provisions of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations;**

(b) **Considering that the maintenance of appropriate conditions for the delegations and missions accredited to the United Nations is in the interest of the United Nations and all Member States, the Committee appreciates the efforts made by the host country to that end and anticipates that all issues raised at its meetings, including those referred to below, will be duly settled in a spirit of cooperation and in accordance with international law;**

(c) **The Committee notes that the observance of privileges and immunities is an issue of great importance. The Committee emphasizes the need to solve, through negotiations, problems that might arise in this regard for the normal functioning of the delegations and the missions accredited to the United Nations. The Committee urges the host country to continue to take appropriate action, such as training of police, security, customs and border control officers, with a view to maintaining respect for diplomatic privileges and immunities. If violations occur, the Committee urges the host country to ensure that such cases are properly investigated and remedied, in accordance with applicable law;**

(d) **Considering that the security of the missions accredited to the United Nations and the safety of their personnel are indispensable for their effective functioning, the Committee appreciates the efforts made by the host country to this end and anticipates that the host country will continue to take all measures necessary to prevent any interference with the functioning of the missions;**

(e) **The Committee notes the problems experienced by some permanent missions in connection with the implementation of the Parking Programme and shall remain seized of the matter, with a view to continuously ensuring the proper implementation of the Parking Programme in a manner that is fair, non-discriminatory, effective and therefore consistent with international law. The Committee decides to conduct another review of the implementation of the Programme during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly and, subject to its outcome, will proceed accordingly;**

(f) **The Committee notes the comments made by the host country with regard to efforts made to improve the implementation of the Parking Programme and also notes the participation of the representatives of the City of New York in its meetings;**

(g) **The Committee requests the host country to continue to bring to the attention of New York City officials reports about other problems experienced by permanent missions or their staff in order to improve the conditions for**

their functioning and to promote compliance with international norms concerning diplomatic privileges and immunities, and to continue to consult with the Committee on these important issues;

(h) The Committee recalls that, in accordance with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 2819 (XXVI), the Committee shall consider, and advise the host country on, issues arising in connection with the implementation of the Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations;

(i) The Committee anticipates that the host country will enhance its efforts to ensure the issuance, in a timely manner, of entry visas to representatives of Member States pursuant to article IV, section 11, of the Headquarters Agreement to travel to New York on official United Nations business, including to attend official United Nations meetings, and notes that a number of delegations have requested shortening the time frame applied by the host country for issuance of entry visas to representatives of Member States, since this time frame poses difficulties for the full-fledged participation of Member States in United Nations meetings; the Committee also anticipates that the host country will enhance efforts to facilitate participation, including visa issuance, of representatives of Member States in other United Nations meetings as appropriate;

(j) Concerning travel regulations issued by the host country with regard to personnel of certain missions and staff members of the Secretariat of certain nationalities, the Committee notes that some travel restrictions were removed during the course of the past year. The Committee urges the host country to remove the travel restrictions. In that regard, the Committee notes the positions of the affected Member States as reflected in the report, of the Secretary-General and of the host country;

(k) The Committee stresses the importance of permanent missions, their personnel and Secretariat personnel meeting their financial obligations;

(l) The Committee welcomes the participation of Members of the United Nations in its work and emphasizes its importance. The Committee also welcomes the participation of representatives of the Secretariat in its work. The Committee is convinced that its important work has been strengthened by the cooperation of all concerned;

(m) The Committee wishes to reiterate its appreciation to the representative of the United States Mission in charge of host country affairs and to the Host Country Affairs Section of the United States Mission to the United Nations, as well as to those local entities, in particular the New York City Commission for the United Nations, Consular Corps and Protocol, that contribute to its efforts to help accommodate the needs, interests and requirements of the diplomatic community and to promote mutual understanding between the diplomatic community and the people of the City of New York.

Annex I

List of topics for consideration by the Committee

1. Question of the security of missions and the safety of their personnel.

2. Consideration of and recommendations on issues arising in connection with the implementation of the Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, including:

   (a) Entry visas issued by the host country;

   (b) Acceleration of immigration and customs procedures;

   (c) Exemption from taxes.

3. Responsibilities of permanent missions to the United Nations and their personnel, in particular the problem of claims of financial indebtedness and procedures to be followed with a view to resolving the issues relating thereto.

4. Housing for diplomatic personnel and for Secretariat staff.

5. Question of privileges and immunities:

   (a) Comparative study of privileges and immunities;

   (b) Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and other relevant instruments.

6. Host country activities: activities to assist members of the United Nations community.

7. Transportation: use of motor vehicles, parking and related matters.

8. Insurance, education and health.

9. Public relations of the United Nations community in the host city and the question of encouraging the mass media to publicize the functions and status of permanent missions to the United Nations.

10. Consideration and adoption of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly.

Annex II

List of documents

A/AC.154/364	Letter dated 19 December 2005 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the host country
A/AC.154/365	Letter dated 28 December 2005 from the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee
A/AC.154/366	Letter dated 10 May 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee
A/AC.154/367	Letter dated 15 May 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee
A/AC.154/368	Letter dated 19 June 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee
A/AC.154/369	Letter dated 11 September 2006 from the Minister Counsellor for Host Country Affairs of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee
A/AC.154/370	Letter dated 28 September 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee
A/AC.154/371	Letter dated 17 October 2006 from the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee
A/61/346	Letter dated 14 September 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General
A/61/474	Letter dated 28 September 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General
A/C.2/61/6	Letter dated 6 October 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General
A/C.6/61/2	Letter dated 25 October 2006 from the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Sixth Committee

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